

FISCAL NOTE

HB 1126 - SB 1645

March 22, 2007

SUMMARY OF BILL: Enacts the "Voter-Owned Elections Act" and establishes the Tennessee Democracy Fund, to be administered by the Registry of Election Finance, as an alternative source of campaign financing for candidates who obtain a sufficient number of qualifying contributions from registered voters and who voluntarily accept strict fund-raising and spending limits. This funding mechanism will be available to candidates for the General Assembly in elections to be held in 2008 and thereafter, and to candidates for Governor in elections to be held in 2010 and thereafter. The Fund is established to finance the election campaigns of certified candidates and to pay administrative and enforcement costs of the Registry related to this Act.

There is established under the Registry a five-member Voter-Owned Elections Advisory Council which shall advise the Registry on the rules and opinions it adopts for the enforcement and administration of this Act and on the funding needs of the Democracy Fund. This Act establishes a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 per violation; and, in addition, a candidate found in violation may be required to return all amounts distributed to the candidate from the Fund.

ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:

Increase State Expenditures:

**Registry of Election Finance - Exceeds \$50,000 One-Time
Exceeds \$200,000 Recurring
Tennessee Democracy Fund - Exceeds \$10,300,000**

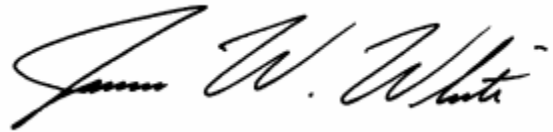
Assumptions:

- The increase in state appropriations of an amount exceeding \$10,300,000 to the Democracy Fund would be used to assist certified candidates fund their election campaigns.
- An increase in state expenditures of approximately \$200,000 recurring and \$50,000 one-time would be required for additional staff and operating costs to the Registry of Election Finance to handle the comprehensive public campaign financing.
- Section 1 of the bill makes the Fund available to candidates for the General Assembly in elections to be held in 2008 and thereafter and to candidates for Governor in elections to be held in

2010 and thereafter. However, Section 4 of the bill makes the Fund available to candidates for the General Assembly and for Governor in 2010 and thereafter. For purposes of this fiscal note, it is assumed that the Fund would be available to candidates in 2008 and thereafter.

CERTIFICATION:

This is to duly certify that the information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James W. White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

James W. White, Executive Director